

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An ink jet printing apparatus comprising:

a carriage mounted with a printing head for ejecting ink and for scanning the printing head in a main scanning direction;

suction means for sucking ink from the printing head;

capping means for performing a cap closing operation in which an ejection port surface of the printing head is covered with a cap member when said suction means sucks ink from the printing head and performing a cap opening operation in which the cap member is separated from the ejection port surface after suction by said suction means; and

~~cap opening help~~ means performing a cap opening help operation that facilitates the cap opening operation, when said capping means performs the cap opening operation;

detection means for detecting whether the cap opening operation by said capping means can be performed or not;

wherein help means performs the cap opening help operation if said detection means detects that the cap opening operation by said capping means cannot be performed.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cap opening and cap closing operations by said capping means are performed by means of moving of the carriage in the main scanning direction.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, wherein said cap opening operation detecting means detects whether said carriage can move or not.

Claim 5 (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said cap opening operation detecting means includes means for detecting a moving distance of said carriage by means of an encoder detecting a position of said carriage.

Claim 6 (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said cap opening operation detecting means includes means for detecting a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage.

Claim 7 (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said cap opening operation detecting means includes means for detecting whether a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage is more than a predetermined value and the value more than the predetermined value continues for a predetermined time.

Claim 8 (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said cap opening help means includes means for stopping the cap member at the printing head for a predetermined time.

Claim 9 (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said cap opening help means includes means for performing a micro-reciprocating motion of said carriage in the main scanning direction.

Claim 10 (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said cap opening help means includes means for causing predetermined positive pressure inside the cap member for a predetermined time.

Claim 11 (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said cap opening help means has a combination of opening help means for stopping the cap member at the printing head for a predetermined time, opening help means for performing a micro-reciprocating motion of said carriage in the main scanning direction, and opening help means for causing predetermined positive pressure inside the cap member for a predetermined time.

Claim 12 (Original): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said cap opening operation detecting means is means of a combination of detecting means for detecting a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage, detecting means for detecting whether a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage is more than a predetermined value and the value more than the

predetermined value continues for a predetermined time, and detecting means for detecting a moving distance of said carriage by means of an encoder detecting a position of said carriage.